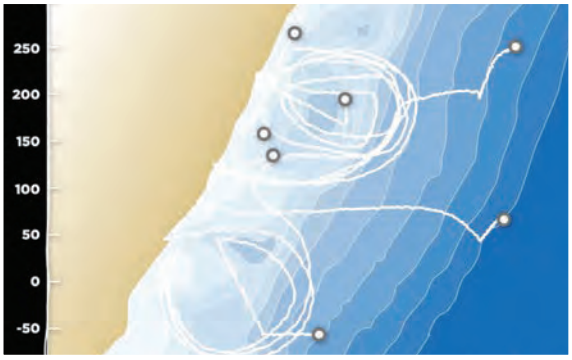
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

A National Geographic public education project devoted to addressing the greatest hazard on Australia's beaches - Rip Currents



RIP CURRENT HEROES

The world's first rip current documentary special with a dedicated study guide focusing on rip current science and survival strategies

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http://www.metromagazine.com.au
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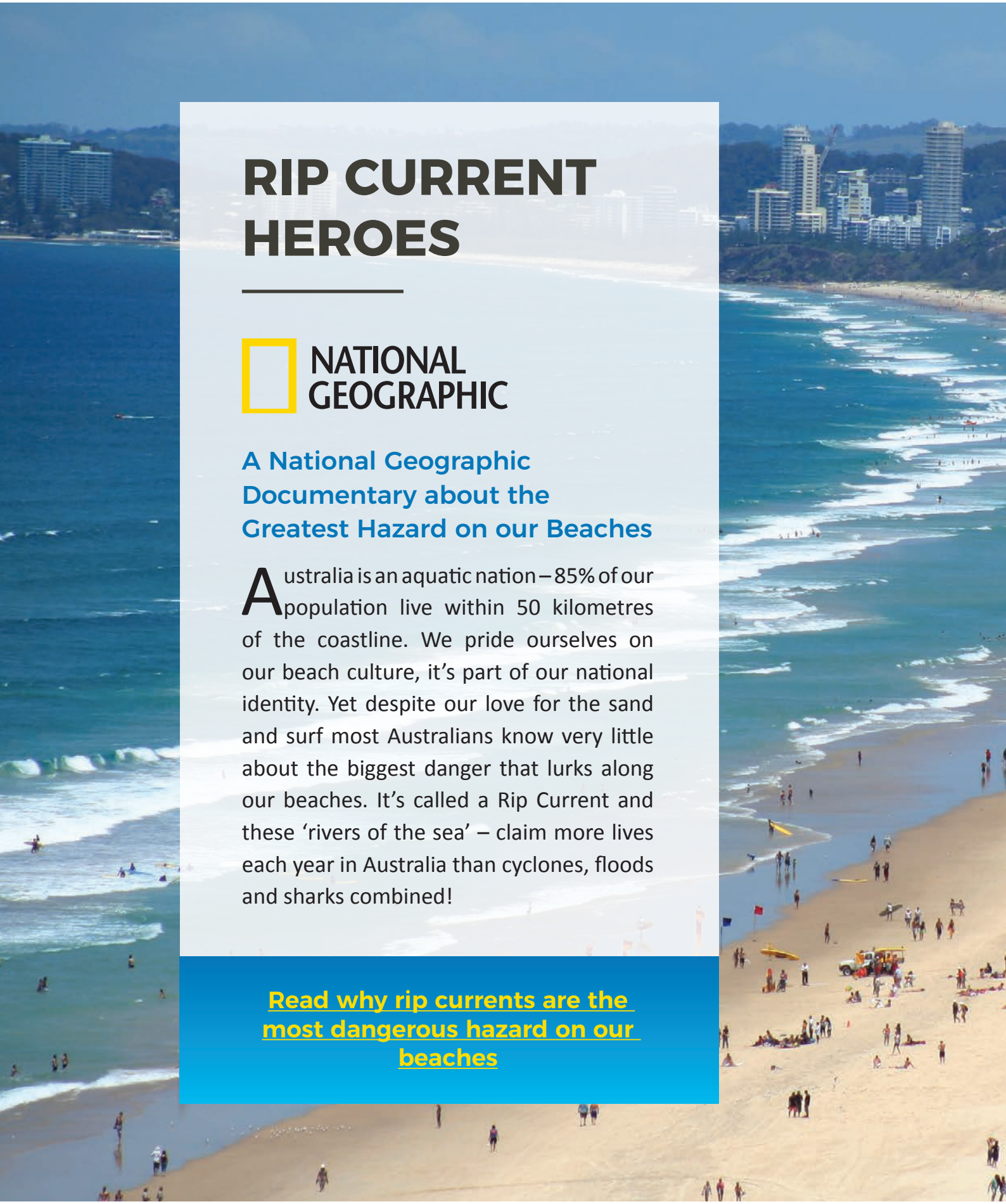
A STUDY GUIDE BY ATOM



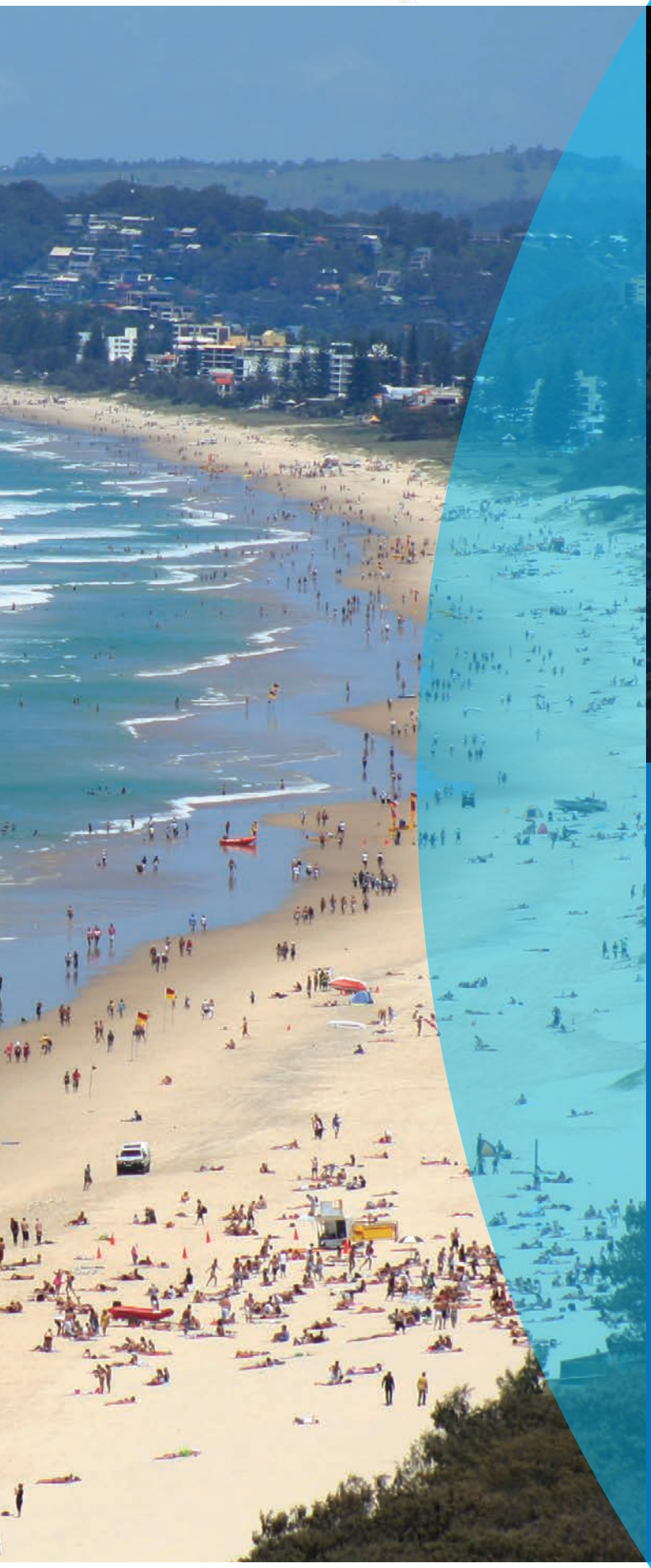
RIP CURRENT HEROES

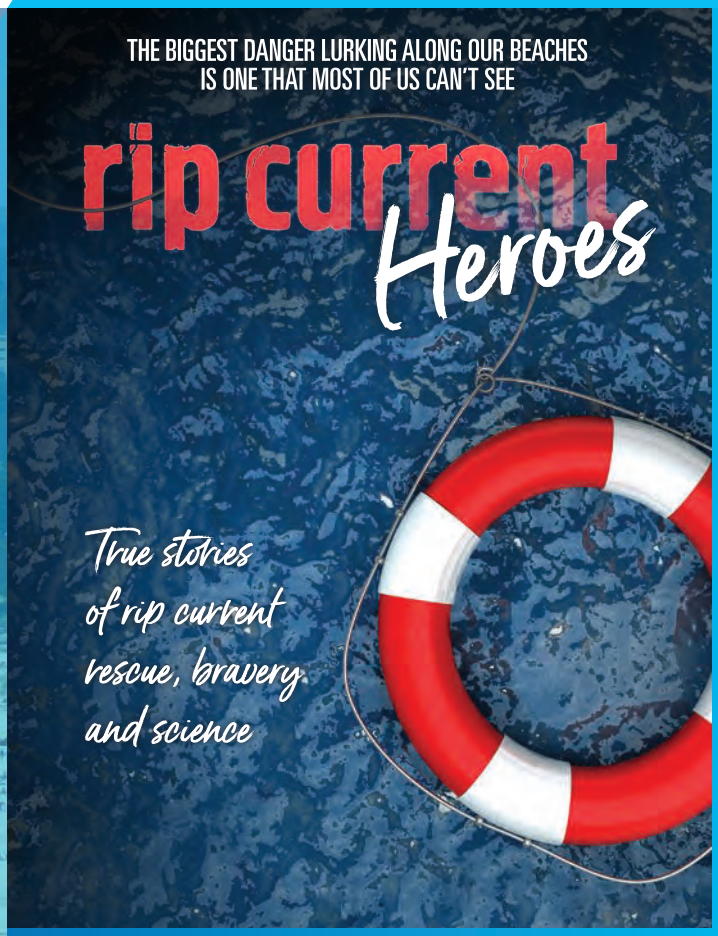
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

A National Geographic Documentary about the Greatest Hazard on our Beaches

Australia is an aquatic nation – 85% of our population live within 50 kilometres of the coastline. We pride ourselves on our beach culture, it's part of our national identity. Yet despite our love for the sand and surf most Australians know very little about the biggest danger that lurks along our beaches. It's called a Rip Current and these 'rivers of the sea' – claim more lives each year in Australia than cyclones, floods and sharks combined!

Read why rip currents are the most dangerous hazard on our beaches





This study guide is the first of its kind devoted to rip currents and uses a new documentary 'Rip Current Heroes' to provide users knowledge of:

- The science of rip currents: what they are, how they form and how they flow
- The different types of rip currents and where they occur
- How to spot rip currents
- What to do if caught in a rip current
- How to react when someone else is caught in a rip current
- Approaches to educating communities about a natural hazard

ABOUT RIP CURRENT HEROES

This 50 minute National Geographic documentary examines rip current science, survival strategies and community responses to rip current incidents occurring in their own backyard.

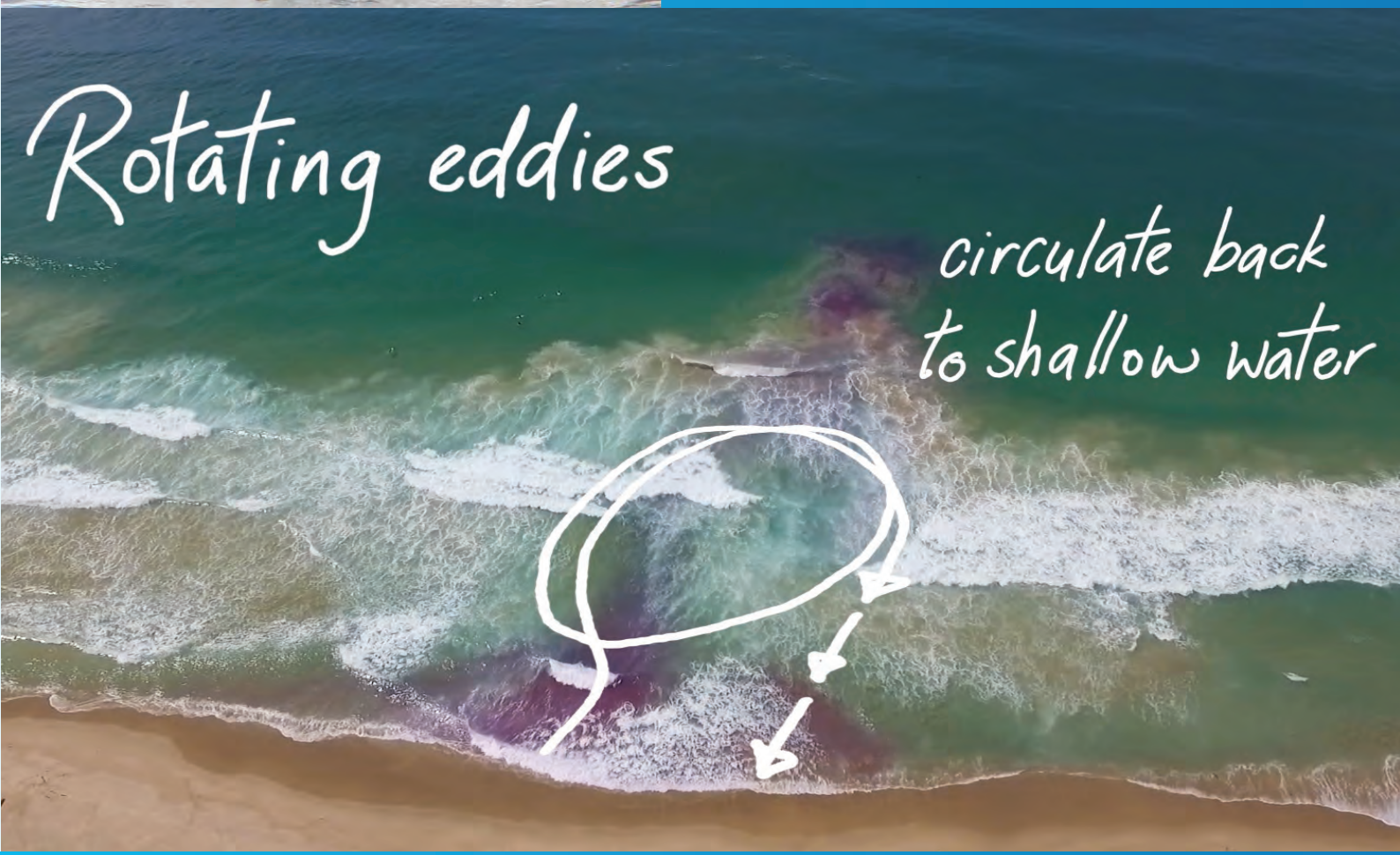
"This unique education program should be compulsive viewing for every Australian beachgoer.... its content can save lives"
- Sydney Media review

A 50-minute documentary, Rip Current Heroes provides a clear, comprehensive and engaging overview of the single greatest threat to our beach safety – rip currents. Produced by National Geographic and Markland Media and screening on National Geographic in Australia and New Zealand and now available in the new National Geographic App, this unique program is narrated by much loved Australian actor Rhys Muldoon – who himself had a near death experience in a rip current – and is essential viewing for all beachgoers.

Watch the full documentary

Often referred to as 'rivers of the sea', rip currents are strong, narrow flows of water that can carry even the strongest swimmer out toward the ocean at frightening speeds. Rip Current Heroes provides hard-hitting facts about rip currents, which are responsible for most surf rescues performed on Australian beaches and they're also the leading cause of drowning deaths on our beaches.

The program follows the ground breaking research of surf scientist Dr Rob Brander (aka Dr Rip) from UNSW Sydney as he takes the audience beneath the water surface to reveal the secrets of how these currents operate.



KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO RIP CURRENT SURVIVAL

This compelling documentary weaves together several narrative threads. One is the gripping re-enactment of real-life stories of people who survived rip currents as well as those who tragically died. These sequences use point of view and bird's eye view camera angles in conjunction with dramatic music to re-tell powerful stories of survival and tragedy.

As the title of the documentary suggests, these stories also honour and pay tribute to those who risked their lives to rescue someone caught in a rip. One tragedy is the death of Ryan Martin on March 25th 2016, who drowned while rescuing a 7-year-old girl caught in a rip in northern NSW's Dreamtime beach.

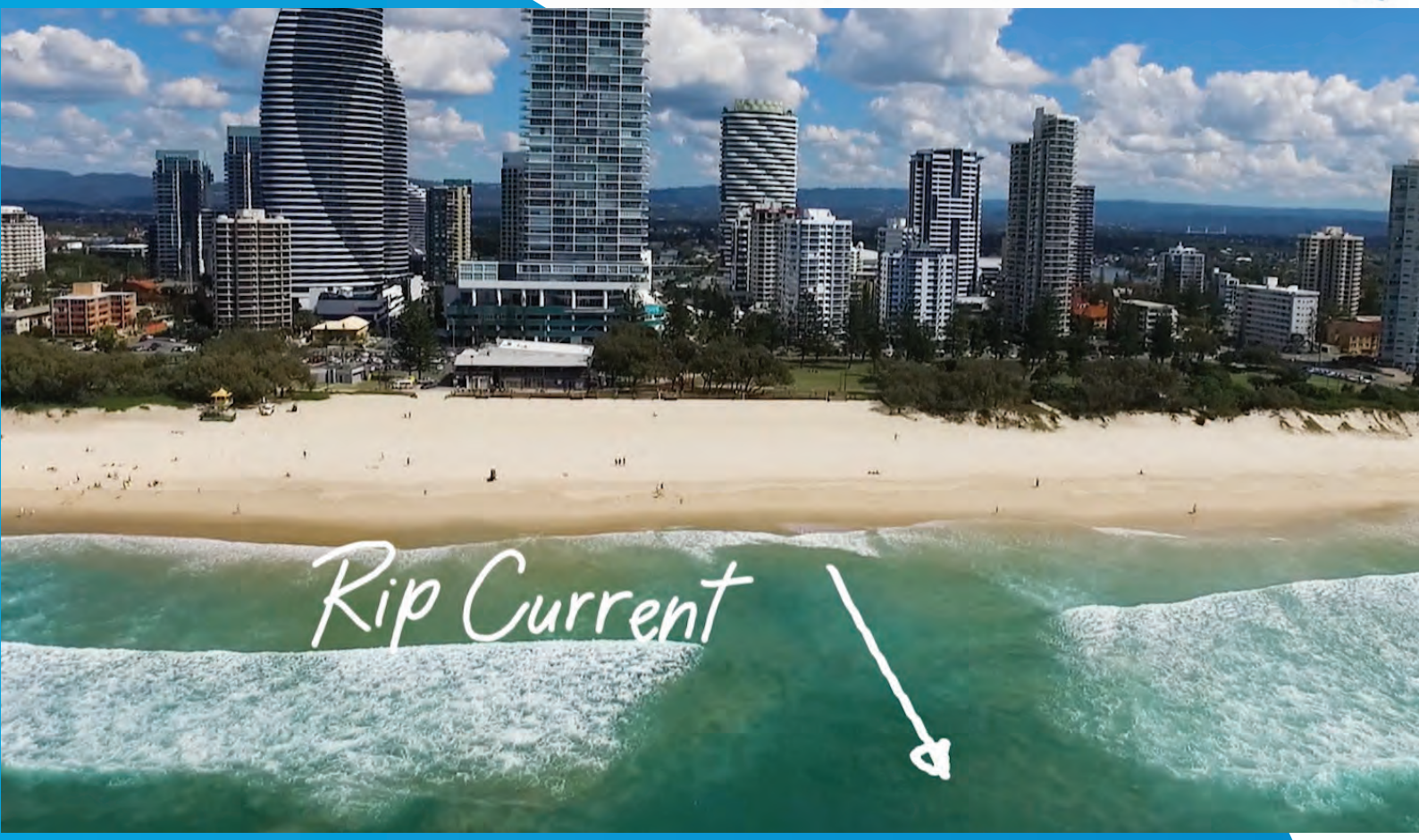
Rip Current Heroes portrays the suffering and trauma endured by those who attempted to revive him and on his family who have had to come to terms with his loss. The documentary is dedicated to his memory.

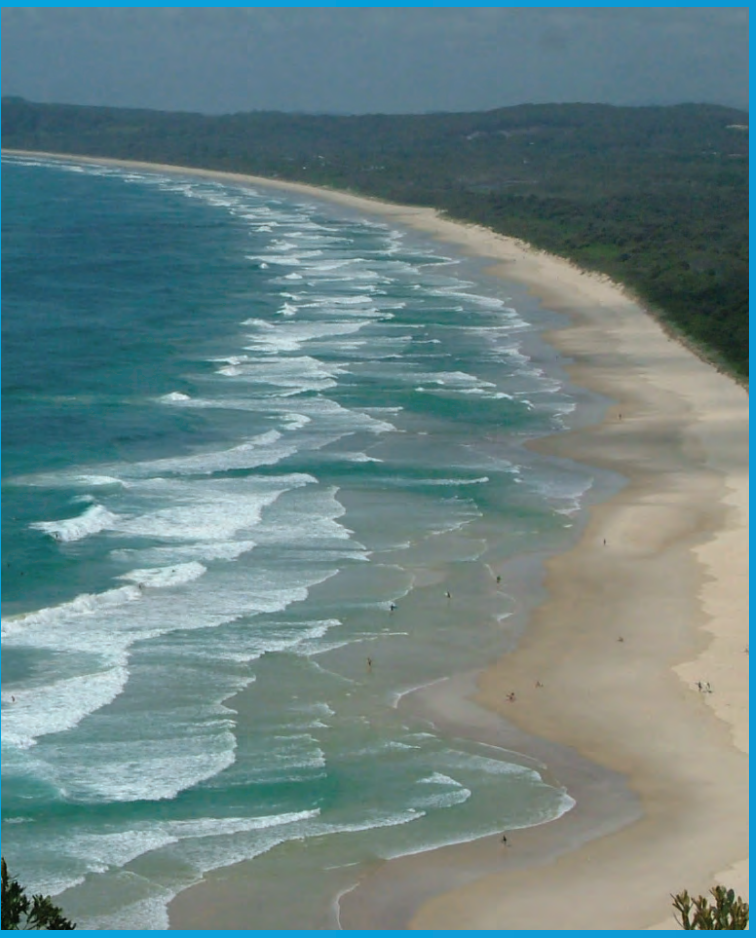
Learn more about the bravery of Ryan Martin on Dreamtime Beach

Alongside these moving dramatisations is the narrative of scientific understanding and explanation provided by Dr Brander. Using plain and accessible language combined with clear graphics and imagery, Dr Brander presents information about rip current formation, flow characteristics, the different types of rips that can occur and how to spot them, and what to do if you find yourself caught in a rip current.

A Coastal Geomorphologist and Professor at the School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences at Sydney's University of New South Wales, Dr Brander has worked tirelessly for many years to better understand rip currents. Recently, he has used innovative technology by placing mobile devices called 'drifters' with attached GPS units into rip currents.

This has allowed Dr Brander and other scientists to understand the flow direction and flow speed of rip currents as well as their unique 'pulsing characteristic, when their speed dramatically increases in a matter of seconds.



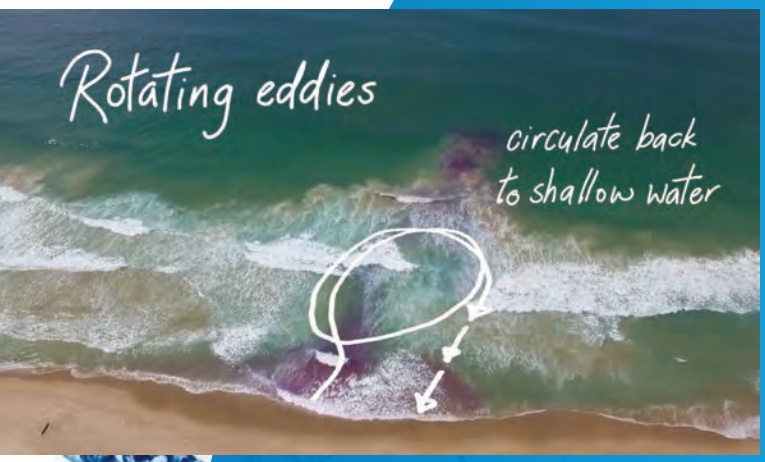


[Learn more about what rip currents are]

[Learn how to spot the most common type of rip current]

[Learn about the different kinds of rip currents]

[Learn how rip currents form]



A fascinating aspect of Brander's research is his decision to attach GPS devices to people in order to test rip escape strategies. Discovering that rip currents can either move in a circular fashion like a rotating eddy or extend various distances beyond the surf zone has in turn enabled Dr Brander to provide strategic information to the public on what to do when caught in a rip.

A crucial narrative thread present in Rip Current Heroes is tied to the broader public education campaign of informing people about beach safety. From the outset, all beachgoers are urged to swim in patrolled beaches between the yellow flags. However, as Dr Brander concedes, only 4% of Australia's beaches are patrolled and therefore it is vital that all Australian beachgoers are able to 'read' the surf conditions. This means that they need to be able to spot a rip and know what to do when caught in one and, critically, that they take at least 5 minutes before going in the water to scan for a rip and thereby choose the safest area to swim, or choose not to swim at all.

An important theme throughout Rip Current Heroes is the issue of bystander rescuers – those people, often complete strangers, who enter the water to help others. In some instances these bystander rescues save lives, in others it is the bystander rescuers themselves who tragically become the victims. Rip Current Heroes recreates some bystander rescues

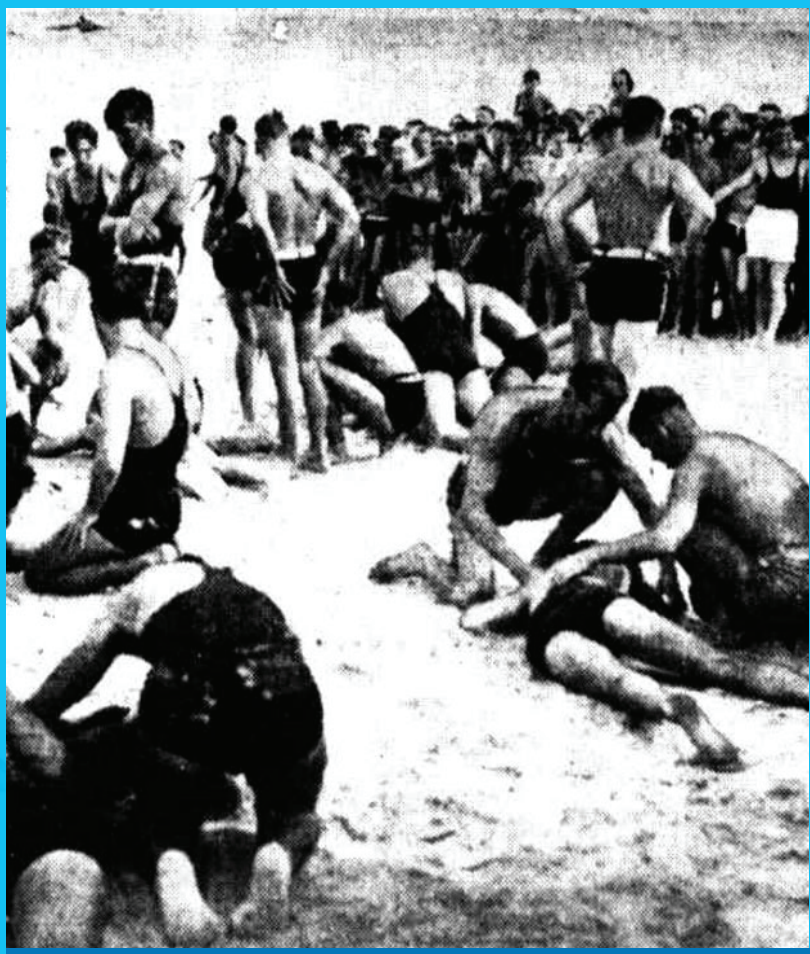
and provides information on simple ways that future rescues can be made safer.

Rip Current Heroes makes the point repeatedly that the most effective way to prevent rip current drowning's, aside from swimming on patrolled beaches is to arm the public with key information about beach safety so that just as people look both ways before crossing a road they should always spend time scanning the water for rip currents and other hazards before deciding to go in.

The documentary also highlights the inspiring work of the Fingal Heads community in Northern New South Wales who have rallied together to address a serious rip current problem occurring in their own back yard. Fingal is home to the Juraki Surf and Culture Group, an indigenous volunteer youth club and together Juraki and others members of the Fingal community have taken a 'citizen lifeguard' approach to helping address the rip current problem on nearby Dreamtime Beach.

As our knowledge of rips becomes clearer and more detailed than ever before, it is hoped that an event like Black Sunday, which took place on Bondi Beach in 1938 in which 5 people tragically lost their lives, is unlikely to occur again. However, any reduction in the number of drowning fatalities is correlative to the level of awareness about rips among the general public.

As Rip Current Heroes repeatedly states, the central and critical challenge in preventing fatalities is to communicate basic knowledge about rips to the public so that all beach goers are able to read the water and determine the safest area to swim. Like any public education campaign that seeks to achieve a cultural shift in behaviour, a long-term, multi-pronged approach is required. Rip Current Heroes is an important, initial step in that campaign.



Watch more about the Black Sunday event on Bondi Beach in 1938

RIP CURRENT ESCAPE STRATEGIES

Each year thousands of people are caught in rip currents in Australia and while many are able to escape by themselves, many require rescue, and tragically, far too many drown. While prevention and avoidance is promoted through the 'swim between the flags message' and efforts to help people identify rip currents, the unfortunate reality is that people will always find themselves caught in rips and in these situations they need to be aware of how to react and potentially escape, particularly if no lifeguards or surfers are nearby.

Beach safety practitioners in Australia and around the world have long provided education advice on how to react when caught in a rip current. While it is universally agreed upon that people should be made aware 'not to panic' when caught in a rip, this is easier said than done. Research conducted on rip current survivors has shown that even experienced ocean users can be overwhelmed by panic when caught in a rip. Another key message is that people should not swim back to the beach against the strong rip current flow, as this will often lead to exhaustion and panic.

Never attempt to swim against the flow of a rip current - they're just too powerful

This rip current flows offshore, but many flow at angles away from the beach

This diagram illustrates a re-circulating rip current within the surf zone

There has been some recent debate regarding the long-standing advice of swimming parallel to the beach to escape a rip current. This strategy is based on the traditional idea that rip currents flow perpendicular from the beach, through the surf zone and considerable distances beyond. As rips are relatively narrow, swimming parallel to the beach theoretically provides a short swim and escape out of the rip before being taken significant distances offshore. However, not all rip currents flow straight offshore and not all people caught in rip currents are good swimmers. Recent research using GPS Drifters has shown that many rip currents re-circulate in the surf zone and in these cases, relaxing and floating may be a better escape option as it conserves energy and people may find themselves re-circulated back into shallow water where they can stand up.

Recent research led by Dr Rob Brander using GPS Drifters and swimmers with attached GPS has tested the swim parallel vs stay afloat escape strategies and results have clearly shown that while both approaches can be successful, they can also both be unsuccessful. There is no single strategy that a person caught in a rip can always use that will guarantee they will successfully escape from a rip. This is largely due to the variability of rip current flow over space and time and the different types of rip currents that exist.

Learn how to survive a rip current.

The results of this research have shown that when a person is caught in a rip current, they should be aware that they have options. They should try not to panic and avoid swimming back to the beach and should relax, float and signal for help in the first instance. If they feel they can swim out of the rip current, they can try to slowly swim towards the side of the rip current by aiming for areas where waves are breaking and there is a lot of whitewater. If this is not working, they can go back to floating and seeking help. It's not a perfect solution, which provides further motivation for why beachgoers should always try and swim at patrolled beaches between the flags, or not go in the water.

Learn more about rip current survivors insights.


SURF
LIFE SAVING
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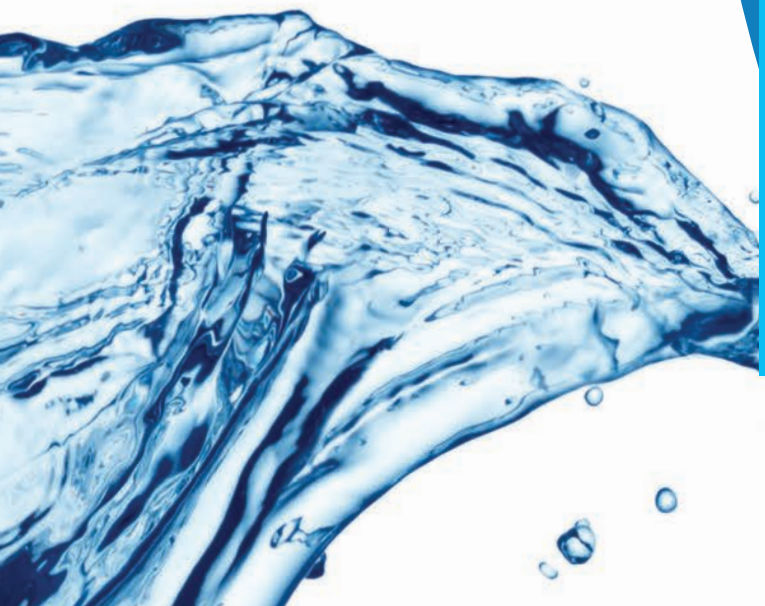
RIP CURRENTS

USEFUL INFORMATION – FACTS AND FIGURES

Rip currents are strong, narrow seaward flowing currents that can carry even the strongest swimmer out toward the ocean at frightening speeds. Scientists estimate that at any given time there may be up to 17,000 rip currents operating along Australia's 11,000 beaches. With less than 4% of our coastline patrolled by lifeguards or lifesavers the potential for a beachgoer to be caught in a rip current is tremendously high. Research indicates that one out of four Australians have been caught in a rip current at some stage in their lifetime.

Most of these incidents can be attributed to the alarming fact that despite being a beach loving nation, at least 70% of beachgoers don't know how to spot a rip current and just as many Australians don't know what to do if they find themselves caught in one of these complex currents. This is a major public safety issue that tragically leads to many lives being lost each summer on our beaches.



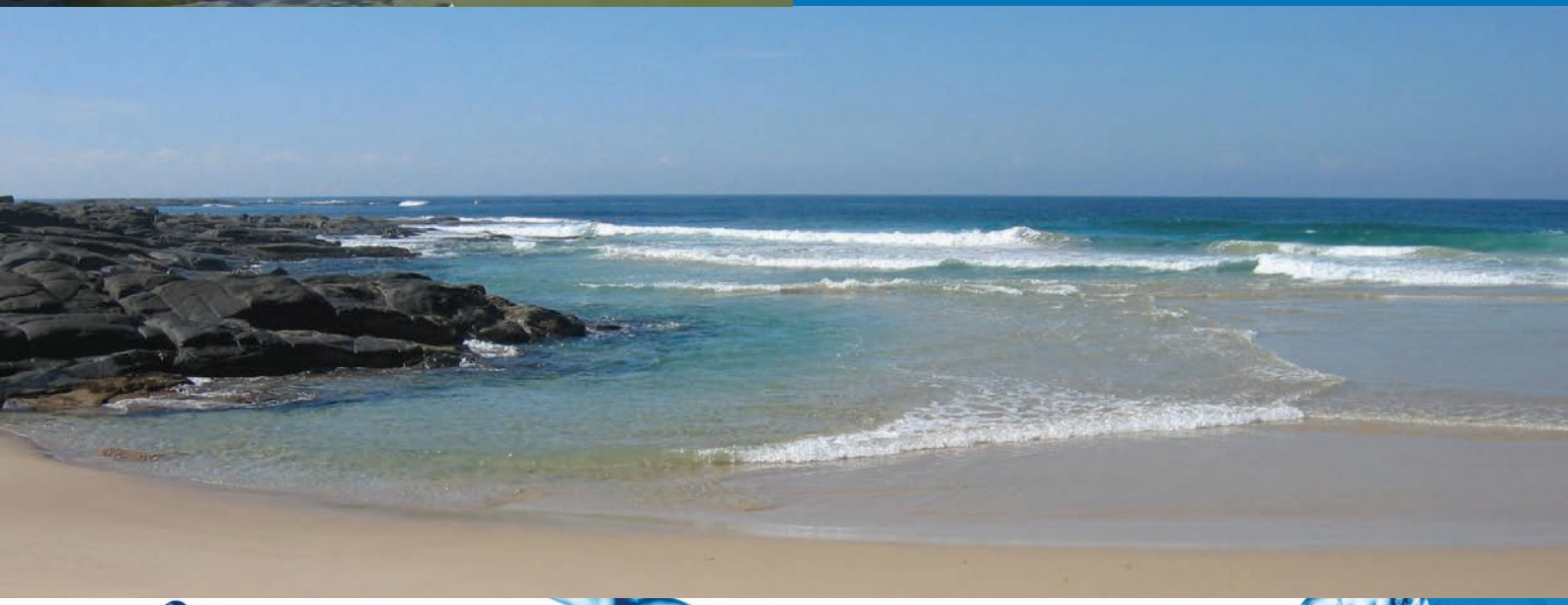
The majority of rip current drowning's take place underneath bright blue skies and what appear to be perfect beach conditions.

Many of Australia's rip current incidents take place on isolated stretches of coastline where the nearest patrolled beach is neither close or convenient. But there are just as many drowning's that occur within several hundred meters of patrolled beaches.

RIP CURRENTS

USEFUL INFORMATION – FACTS AND FIGURES

Rob Brander's research with the GPS drifters has revealed that the average rip current flows offshore at speeds of about half a meter to one meter per second, but they all have a tendency to 'pulse' in speed. When this occurs they can suddenly double their flow speed from one meter to two meters per second – which is faster than Olympic swimming speeds.



There are many different kinds of rips. The most common type is a channelised rip. These rips occupy deep channels between sand bars and they can stay in the same place for days, weeks and even months.

Then there's boundary rips - which can also be channelised and are found against headlands and other structures reaching out into the ocean like piers and jetties. Sometimes these can be almost permanent. But one of the most dangerous and unpredictable rips is the Flash Rip.

To be able to form rip currents need breaking waves. It's the spatial variation in the breaking waves, normally caused by undulations in the sand beds that commonly begins the process of a rip current forming. A flow develops that moves from the region of intense wave breaking toward the region of reduced or no wave breaking inside the surf zone. This flow is the pathway of least resistance for outgoing water – often a perfect channel – just like a river of the sea. The water flowing out along this channel **is** the rip current.

CURRICULUM LINKS

Rip Current Heroes is suitable viewing for secondary school students at all year levels. For students in Years 7 – 10, Rip Current Heroes has relevance to units of work in the learning areas of Health and Physical Education, Science, Geography and English and addresses the general capability of Critical and Creative Thinking and the cross-curriculum priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

This area of learning includes a focus on safety – both personal safety and the safety of others. Rip Current Heroes gives students the opportunity to reflect on crucial matters of safety when swimming in a beach with breaking waves. A major intention of this documentary is to provide viewers with the kind of information that will prevent injury or tragic loss of life. Standards in particular that relate are listed.

- Plan, rehearse and evaluate options (including CPR and first aid) for managing situations where their own or others' health, safety and wellbeing may be at short or long term risk **(ACPPS091)**

- Evaluate situations and propose appropriate emotional responses and then reflect on possible outcomes of different responses **(ACPPS094)**

- Plan and evaluate new and creative interventions that promote their own and 14 others' connection to community and natural and built environments **(ACPPS097)**

SCIENCE

In Science, students explain natural phenomena, understand the relationship between motion and forces and examine the relationship between living and physical worlds and examine how change affects equilibrium in these systems. The Science curriculum standards that are most relevant to the text are listed below.

- Advances in scientific understanding often rely on technological advances and are often linked to scientific discoveries **(ACSHE192)**
- People use scientific knowledge to evaluate whether they accept claims, explanations or predictions, and advances in science can affect people's lives, including generating new career opportunities **(ACSHE194)**
- Values and needs of contemporary society can influence the focus of scientific research **(ACSHE230)**
- Communicate scientific ideas and information or a particular purpose, including constructing evidence-based arguments and using appropriate scientific language, conventions and representations **(ACSIS208)**
- Scientific knowledge has changed people's understanding of the world and is refined as new evidence becomes available **(ACSHE119) (ACSHE134)**
- Identify questions and problems that can be investigated scientifically and make predictions based on scientific knowledge **(ACSIS124) (ACSIS139)**
- Use knowledge of scientific concepts to draw conclusions that are consistent with evidence **(ACSIS170) (ACSIS204)**

GEOGRAPHY

Year 7 Geography contains a focus titled 'Water in the world'. Here, a unit of study on rip currents could be introduced with the outcome that students have an understanding of their cause, impact and response.

- Causes, impacts and responses to an atmospheric or hydrological hazard **(ACHGK042)**
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' approaches to custodial responsibility and environmental management in different regions of Australia **(ACHGK072)**

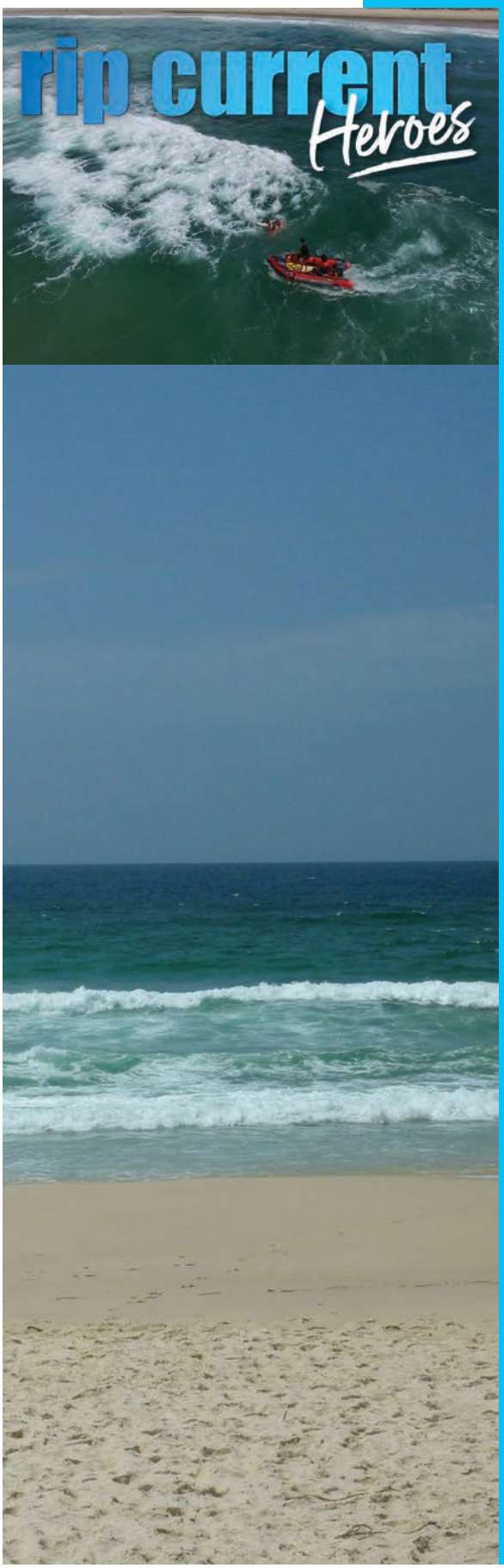
CURRICULUM LINKS

ENGLISH

Rip Current Heroes presents a real-world dilemma and students have the opportunity to develop their comprehension and thinking skills by evaluating and analysing content. They develop their visual literacy skills by analysing how the documentary operates as a text. Students develop language and oral communication skills by creating their own written texts, running debates and delivering class presentations. The English curriculum standards that are most relevant to the text are listed below.

- Understand how language use can have inclusive and exclusive social effects, and can empower or disempower people **(ACELA1564)**
- Understand how paragraphs and images can be arranged for different purposes, audiences, perspectives and stylistic effects **(ACELA1567)**
- Evaluate the impact on audiences of different choices in the representation of still and moving images **(ACELA1572)**
- Refine vocabulary choices to discriminate between shades of meaning, with deliberate attention to the effect on audiences **(ACELA1571)**
- Analyse and explain how text structures, language features and visual features of texts and the context in which texts are experienced may influence audience response **(ACELT1641)**
- Evaluate the social, moral and ethical positions represented in texts **(ACELT1812**)
- Use organisation patterns, voice and language conventions to present a point of view on a subject, speaking clearly, coherently and with effect, using logic, imagery and rhetorical devices to engage audiences **(ACELY1813)**
- Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content and multimodal elements to influence a course of action **(ACELY1751)**
- Identify and analyse implicit or explicit values, beliefs and assumptions in texts and how these are influenced by purposes and likely audiences **(ACELY1752)**
- Create sustained texts, including texts that combine specific digital or media content, for imaginative, informative, or persuasive purposes that reflect upon challenging and complex issues **(ACELY1756)**
- Review, edit and refine students' own and others' texts for control of content, organisation, sentence structure, vocabulary, and/or visual features to achieve particular purposes and effects **(ACELY1757)**
- Use a range of software, including word processing programs, confidently, flexibly and imaginatively to create, edit and publish texts, considering the identified purpose and the characteristics of the user **(ACELY1776)**

STUDENT ACTIVITIES



PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

1. PMI (POSITIVE, MINUS, INTERESTING) AND "THE BEACH"

Have students draw up a PMI chart about "The Beach": what are the positives, the negatives, the interesting things about swimming and being at the beach? Students then share their thoughts with the class. Throughout this discussion, teacher poses direct questions to the class about why they go to the beach and what activities they are likely to partake in. Which beach do they prefer – a quiet, bay beach with no waves or an ocean beach with good waves? What are the factors about beaches that are most important to them in choosing where to visit or swim? A clean beach? One with lifeguards and flags, or one that is closest to home etc.?

2. REFLECTION ACTIVITY

Have students discuss in small groups what they believe are the different hazards at the beach, both in the water and out. Have them rate on a scale of 1-10 (with 1 = low and 10 = high) how dangerous each of these hazards are and discuss why. Each group then shares their thoughts and opinions with the class. If the prevailing view is that sharks are the main danger, it is important to make the point that this is inaccurate and that the documentary Rip Current Heroes will attest to this.

3. KWL TASK

Using the KWL Thinking Tool (template below), get students in groups of three to brainstorm everything they know about rips (Know), to list what they want to know about rips (Want) and finally, after a session of research, what they have learnt about rips (Learnt).

KNOW

- What students already know about rips

WANT

- What students want to know – in the form of a list of questions

LEARNT

- What they have learnt about rips

At the conclusion of the task, each group should present their findings to the whole class and include in their presentation a reflection on what surprised them the most in their research about rip currents.

DURING VIEWING ACTIVITIES

1. REAL-LIFE ACCOUNTS

Rip Current Heroes contains various re-enactments of real-life people caught in a rip current, including a sequence from 1938 that uses archival footage. While viewing the documentary, have students record details about each sequence including the date and location, a brief overview of what happened and why, and the number of fatalities and near-death cases. Refer to Table 1 on page 24.

2. SPOTTING A RIP

According to Rip Current Heroes 70% of Australian beachgoers don't know how to spot a rip. At the 13 minute mark, Dr Brander outlines two key features to look out for. Have students complete the following table about spotting a rip; students must include notes to explain the physical reasons why rips appear as darker water or bumpy water. Complete the Table on Page 25.

3. TYPES OF RIP CURRENTS

Dr Brander tells us there are many different types of rips and that there can be up to 17,000 different rips at any one time on Australian beaches. At the 14 minute mark, he outlines three main types of rips. Have students complete a brief description for each. Refer to Table 3 on page 26.

4. RIP CURRENT ESCAPE STRATEGIES

Using the latest technology Dr Brander has garnered a deep knowledge of rips. On the basis of this knowledge, he has formulated a set of tactics that beachgoers can use to protect themselves if ever caught in a rip. There is no 'one-option-fits-all' as each rip is different. There are only a set of options depending on the conditions of the water and the level of swimming expertise the person possesses. Have students evaluate the different tactics. Ensure students provide detailed explanations for each advantage and disadvantage. Refer to Table 4 on page 27.

5. STAYING CALM

Although it's easier said than done, staying calm when caught in a rip current is vital to staying alive. At the 33 minute mark, Dr Brander explains how panic sets off a physiological chain reaction that only ends in drowning. Have students create a flow chart that illustrates this downward spiral. It must make reference to the following: panic, flight or fight, adrenalin, increase in heart rate, fatigue, lactic acid, poor decision making.

TABLE 1. REAL-LIFE ACCOUNTS

	DATE	LOCATION	WHAT HAPPENED?	NUMBER OF NEAR FATALITIES, NEAR DROWNINGS, RESCUES	WHAT WERE THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO PEOPLE GETTING INTO TROUBLE?
1					
2					
3					
4					

TABLE 2. SPOTTING A RIP

1	VISUAL FEATURE
DARKER COLOUR / ABSENCE OF BREAKING WAVES	
EXPLANATION	

2	VISUAL FEATURE
BUMPY WATER	
EXPLANATION	

TABLE 3. TYPES OF RIP CURRENTS

	TYPE OF RIP	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
1	CHANNELISED RIP	
2	BOUNDARY RIP	
3	FLASH RIP	

TABLE 4. RIP CURRENT ESCAPE STRATEGIES

	STRATEGY
1	SWIM AGAINST THE RIP CURRENT BACK TO THE BEACH

ADVANTAGES (IF ANY)	DISADVANTAGES (IF ANY)

	STRATEGY
2	SWIM TO THE SIDE OF THE RIP (OFTEN REFERRED TO AS SWIMMING PARALLEL TO THE SHORELINE)

ADVANTAGES (IF ANY)	DISADVANTAGES (IF ANY)

	STRATEGY
3	STAY AFLOAT AND SIGNAL FOR HELP

ADVANTAGES (IF ANY)	DISADVANTAGES (IF ANY)

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

1. TPS (THINK/PAIR/SHARE) REFLECTION

Have students turn to the person next to them, sharing their thoughts on the documentary. Questions they can discuss are: what did I learn about rips I didn't know before; what did I learn about beach safety I didn't know before; what will I do differently at the beach now after watching this documentary? What are the key safety messages I got from the documentary? After peer discussion, students share their thoughts with the rest of the class.

2. RIP CURRENT SPOTTING TUTORIAL

Have students examine the images on Pages 32-35 and identify where rip currents are present (if any) and identify the number and type(s) of rip currents in the photos. What is the dominant visual characteristic of each rip current that allows them to be identified?

3. SHOWCASE YOUR KNOWLEDGE!

Students must present their knowledge of rip currents in a format of their choosing. Some suggestions include: A3 poster, website, PowerPoint presentation, iPad app (such as Popplet, Explain Everything). Their presentation must include: a definition of a rip current; an explanation for why they occur; an explanation of the different directions they can move in; an explanation of the different types; an explanation of a rip 'pulse'.

4. JOIN THE CAMPAIGN!

Students are officially part of the public education campaign to foster greater knowledge within the general public about rips. They must complete all or some of the following tasks in groups of 2-3:

a. Create an advertisement (they choose whether for newspaper/magazine, TV, radio) about beach safety. It must communicate the following key facts: rip currents are our greatest threat to beach safety; and the safest option is to swim at patrolled beaches, between the flags. The advertisement must be memorable so it may have a jingle, a rap beat, a catchy phrase as well as clear, iconic visuals.

b. Create an information flyer for the general public about how to spot a rip. It must include the following: an explanation of why and where each type of rip occurs; an explanation of the visual characteristics of each type of rip; information about the flow behaviour of each rip type. The flyer must include clear and labelled visuals.

c. Create an information flyer for the general public about what to do when caught in a rip. It must include the two main options:

(i) swim out of the current by swimming to the side of the rip (often referred to as swimming parallel to the shoreline); and

(ii) stay afloat and signal for help. It must emphasise that the option of swimming against the current can be unviable even for an experienced swimmer because it may lead to fatigue and exhaustion.

The flyer must also emphasise that each beach goer will need to assess water/surf conditions and decide which option is most suitable. It must also include a section on staying calm and the downward spiral created when panic sets in.

d. Deliver a presentation to your school community. Students must visit other classrooms and present information about rip currents and beach safety to a younger audience. The presentation must draw on the information included in the advertisement and information flyers mentioned above.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

5. NEWSPAPER ACTIVITY

Get students to research newspaper stories about rip current drownings in Australian waters over the last two years and then collate a folio of these stories. For each drowning incident, students must make notes about the available demographic information of the people involved (e.g. gender, age, tourist/local), the location of the incident, the circumstances leading to and/or associated with the incident (e.g. patrolled/unpatrolled beach, weather and surf conditions, time of day etc.) and write an account of what they believe are the key factors that contributed to the drownings.

6. COMPREHENSION ACTIVITY

Students read the following opinion piece by Dr Brander published in The Age on December 19, 2017 and answer the following questions.

http://www.smh.com.au/comment/rip-currents-are-more-deadly-than-sharks-but-we-just-dont-take-them-seriously-20171218-h06iep.html

a. In the second paragraph, what is the author referring to when he says "It just doesn't make sense"?

b. "Most [rip drowning] fatalities are due to poor or uninformed decisions about where to go swimming". Explain how and why these decisions are "poor or uninformed".

c. What are some of the limitations of the red and yellow flag system used in Australia?

d. In the absence of red and yellow flags and lifeguards, what are some of the options available to stop rip current drownings?

e. What are some ways the author mentions of delivering "beach safety information" to the public"? Can you think of any more?

f. The author states the most effective way to reduce rip current drownings is through a program of education and awareness-raising so that "just as we always look both ways when crossing the road" people should always take a few minutes to examine the surf and decide whether it's safe to go in the water or not. Reflect on your own beach safety behaviour. Having watched Rip Current Heroes, do you think it will change your behaviour at the beach? Can you think of poor "choices" you've made in the past at the beach and how you will change these in future?

7. DOCUMENTARY AS TEXT

Get students to analyse the cinematography and music during the dramatization scenes. Make a list of the different camera angles used and their effect on the viewer. Describe the music used in these sequences. How does the camera angles and the choice of music position the viewer? What do they make the viewer think or feel?

8. GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM

At the 37 minute mark, Rip Current Heroes introduces the Juraki Surf and Culture Group. Have the students write a profile of the group, including how it continues the work of its cultural ancestors and how its members operate as 'citizen lifeguards'.

9. WRITING ACTIVITIES

Students write a Letter to the Editor to a daily newspaper on one of the following topics. Students must use evidence to support their claims.

a. "Rip currents are a greater threat to beach safety than shark attacks"

b. "The government must invest more towards the prevention of rip current drownings"

c. "Not taking rip current drownings seriously is costing lives"

10. FEATURE ARTICLE

Students write an expository-style, feature article for a student magazine on the topic: "Complacency plus inadequate knowledge of rip currents leads to tragedy".

11. CLASS DEBATE

Hold a class debate on some of the following issues:

a. "The only way to keep people safe on beaches is to tell them to swim between the flags"

b. "It's only tourists who are drowning in rip currents"

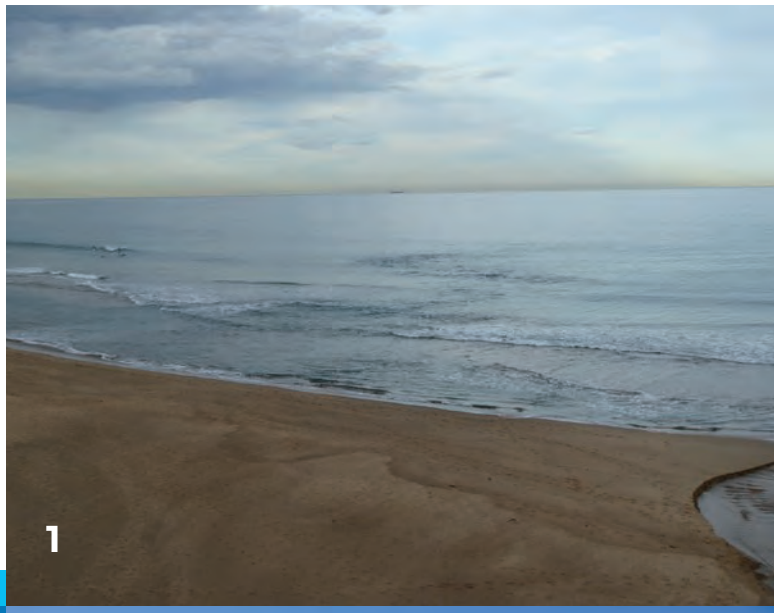
c. What is the best approach to escaping a rip current? Swimming out of it or just staying afloat?

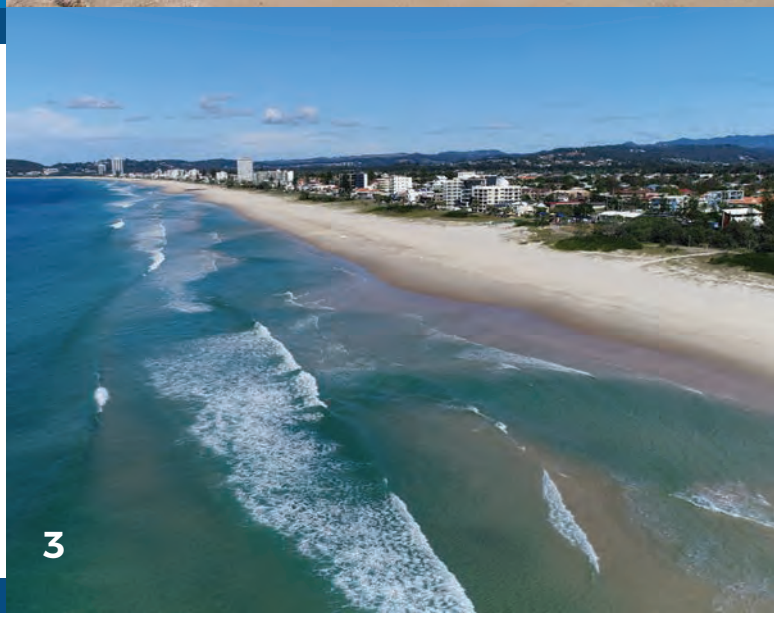
12. THE POWER OF A TV ADVERTISEMENT

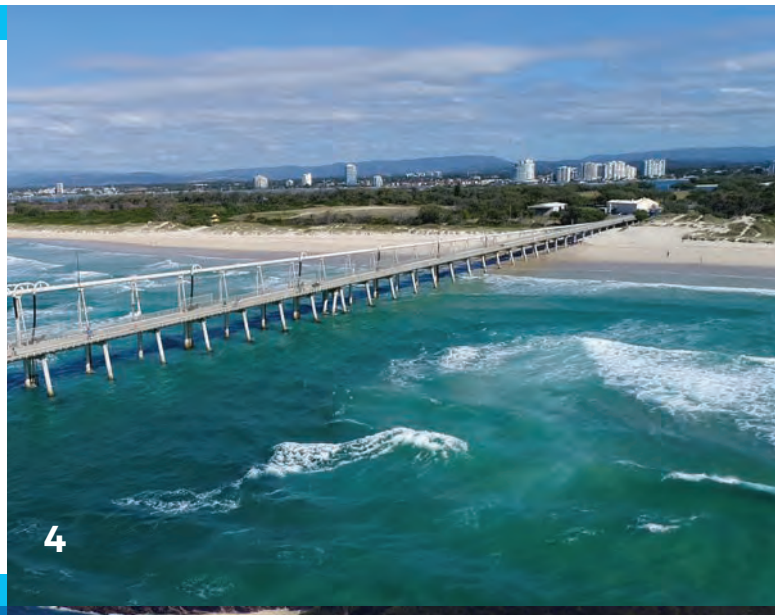
Powerful advertising campaigns have dramatically altered human behaviour in certain situations. A clear example is the TAC ad campaign, launched in late 1989 when the road toll for that year was 776. The moving stories contained in each TAC ad had a powerful impact on viewers, leading to an overall cultural shift in public awareness of safe and morally responsible behaviour when driving on the road. Perceptions shifted so that safe choices were seen as a priority and anything else unthinkable and unconscionable. By 2012 the annual road toll had fallen to 303.

Tell the students they have been employed by the government to develop an advertisement about the threat of rip currents and the best way to avoid being caught in one. Using all their knowledge of rips and beach safety information, the trauma and suffering inflicted on families and friends, students work in teams to devise an advertisement that will engage viewers and alter their beach behaviour. They can provide a storyboard or a detailed synopsis if filmmaking technology is not available.

IDENTIFY THE RIP CURRENTS







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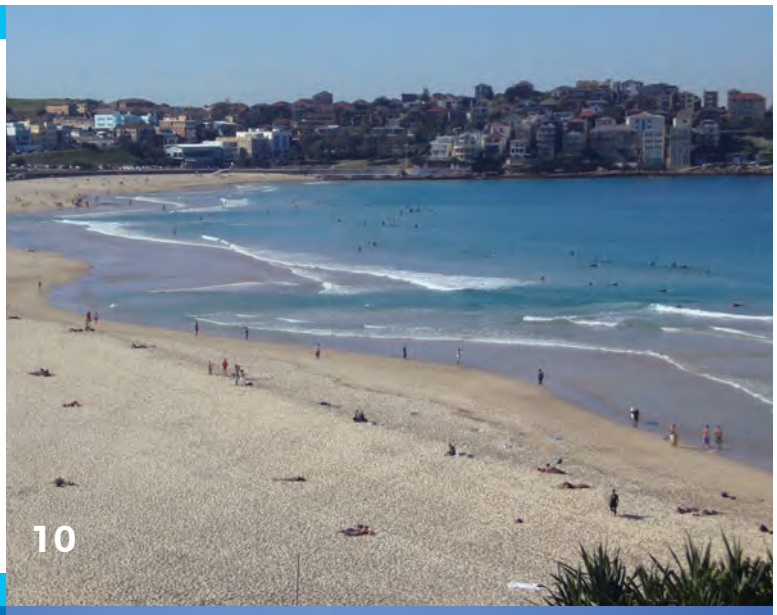
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11


12

USEFUL LINKS

UNSW SYDNEY, PROFESSOR ROB BRANDER
www.bees.unsw.edu.au/our-people/robert-brander

SCIENCE OF THE SURF
www.scienceofthesurf.com

RIP CURRENTS – SLS BEACHSAFE
https://beachsafe.org.au/surf-safety/ripcurrents

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
http://www.nationalgeographic.com.au/

THE AGE
http://www.theage.com.au/

THE HERALD SUN
http://www.heraldsun.com.au/

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